

RECORD
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COMMUNIST BUDDHIST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under previous order of the House, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. WAGGONER] is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. WAGGONER. Mr. Speaker, in recent days, I have tried to read every news dispatch available to me on the civil unrest in Vietnam. I am sure most Members share my concern over the situation there. My particular attention has been focused for the appearance of the name, Thich Tri Quang because there has been no doubt in my mind even at a distance of 8,000 miles that the disturbance there has been fomented by him.

Though, as I say, I have tried to read every dispatch from Vietnam, it is only in the last day or two that casual, almost chance mentions of his name have begun to appear.

It is not particularly newsworthy that the Saigon press corps shows little favor for the U.S. policy in Vietnam. As Pulitzer Prize winning reporter and bureau chief Marguerite Higgins once reportedly said:

Reporters here [in Saigon] would like to see us lose the war to prove they're right.

This same group of newsmen, you will notice, seldom mention in their dispatches that the riots in the streets of Hue, Da Nang, and Saigon are made up almost entirely of children, ranging in age from 6 years to early teens.

At the time in 1963 when world attention was riveted on the horrifying scene of Buddhists setting fire to themselves in the streets in protest against the Diem regime, the Saigon press corps brainwashed the American people and the administration in Washington with the story that Buddhists made up the overwhelming majority of the South Vietnamese people.

The truth slowly rose to the surface only after Diem was overthrown and assassinated; the truth that Buddhists make up less than a third of the population. No searching investigation was made to identify the motives of the man who dominated the General Buddhist Association, the extremist rabble-rouser, Thich Tri Quang.

When we in the United States think of a Buddhist monk, I am sure we all conjure up the picture of a godly man robed in sackcloth going his way among the people to teach religious principles and dedication. And, of course, this is a true image. What, however, is the truth about Thich? Is he this kind of man? Or is he, instead, something entirely different? A diligent search of the record puts this man in clear focus and, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that it be done.

In Joseph Alton's recent column "Ugly Business," there appeared this description of him and the unrest he has created in Vietnam:

One other set of facts to bear in mind concerns the root cause of the present troubles. In brief, the same American voices who are now most stridently bewailing these troubles were major contributors to this root cause. They played a larger role, indeed, than the intriguing, self-intoxicated Buddhist monk, Thich Tri Quang, with his highly probable links to the Vietcong.

These American voices, it must be recalled, gladly, indeed proudly, assumed the peculiar role of chief propagandists for the opposition to the government of President Diem. It will come as no surprise to most of the owners of these voices, for most of them have little Asian experience.

The Alsop column continued with this observation:

At the end, poor Diem was past rescuing, because of the mounting pressures of the general situation, and also because of those pressures' unfortunate effects on the President's all-powerful brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu. But an appropriate commentary on the fall of Diem was nonetheless supplied by the veteran Communist observer, Wilfred Burchett, who called Diem the "one strong nationalist leader" in Vietnam."

To those who still remember the violent overthrow and assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem when he headed the Government in South Vietnam, Thich's name will be familiar. He is the pseudo-Buddhist who organized the revolt which resulted in the coup. When asked about his part in the affair, he made no pretense that the campaign was without political motivations and he is quoted as saying:

Don't you think it will help our cause if some of us are killed?

This was the callous retort of the man who urged other monks to immolate themselves in a fiery death as a political protest. The question needs to be answered, Mr. Speaker, whether this is the attitude of a true Buddhist or a political demagog. In my mind, his political activity to undermine the pro-American governments of South Vietnam cannot be squared with the five moral rules of conduct laid down by Buddha: let no one kill any living thing; take not anything that is not given to you; speak not falsely; do not drink intoxicating beverages; be chaste.

Let us look at Thich's record and determine if he is a man of God or, in fact, a conscious agent of the Vietcong.

According to the records of the French colonial office, Thich Tri Quang was twice arrested for his dealings with Ho Chi Minh. He has admitted himself that he served after 1945 with Communist front groups working with Ho's Vietcong army.

Our own Embassy in Saigon has had this to say about him:

Tri Quang himself has said that he acceded to Viet Minh invitations to collaborate with them in the 1940's and that in response to their demands he served as chairman of the United Vietnamese Association which was controlled by the Viet Minh and was located near his home village in Quang Binh province.

Thich Tri Quang also for a time led a Communist-front Buddhist organization collaborating with Ho Chi Minh.

According to the French, who still have representatives at Hanoi, Thich's brother is currently working for Ho Chi Minh in the Communist Vietnam's Ministry of the Interior. It is significant, Mr. Speaker, that the duties of Thich's brother include the direction of subversion in South Vietnam.

Thich is a disciple of Thich Tri Do who is now in Communist North Vietnam as leader of the Buddhist puppet organization there. And on at least one occasion, Thich has made the statement that, in his opinion, communism is entirely compatible with Buddhism.

This, Mr. Speaker, is the man who is, at the moment, busily stirring up unrest

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